

Johansson, Stig, and Anne-Line Graedler. 2002. *Rocka, hipt og snacksy. Om engelsk i norsk språk og samfunn*. Kristiansand: Høyskoleforlaget. pp.

A review of this engaging and informative book is long overdue and was, in fact, originally meant to be included in the recent special issue of NJES (Vol.3:2, 2004), devoted to the influence of English on the languages in the Nordic countries. The obvious advantage, however, of waiting to produce this review is that last year's NJES thematic issue provided a great deal of interesting comparative material and a variety of perspectives on the topic. Johansson & Graedler's pioneering work, in fact, includes aspects of virtually all the issues represented in the NJES volume, published two years later and dealing with a larger area comprising several different polities and speech communities. Thus both publications discuss types of borrowing, the effect of English on L1 word formation and sentence structure, changing practices in naming, sociolinguistic differences, domain loss, and attitudes to the impact of English.

Johansson 1995, an article which can be viewed as a preliminary or forerunner to the book under review, is introduced as follows:

The influence of the English language and of Anglo-American culture has been strongly felt in Scandinavia in this century. Yet it is a topic which - until recently - has not been given much attention in linguistic research, although it has been frequently commented on in articles and letters to the editor in the press. (Johansson 1995: 269)

Indeed, with the exception of some ambitious, data-based descriptions of loanwords, such as Stene 1945 (on Norwegian), Sørensen 1973 (Danish), Seltén 1993 (Swedish), a corpus-based study of English as used in the Swedish press (Chrystal 1988) and a large-scale informant study on attitudes and usage (Ljung 1985, 1988), the topic does not seem to have caught the attention of many linguists based in the Nordic countries. Yet the first years in the new millennium have seen an upsurge in research. Speculating on reasons for this change of affairs, one might suggest the increased awareness of language contact as an important factor in change and variation, the growing interest in 'World Englishes', the rapidly increasing availability of written as well as spoken language corpora, the interest in youth culture, and the fear of domain loss and endangerment.

As last year's NJES thematic issue also clearly demonstrates, in its very existence as well as its contents, important steps have been taken in the Nordic countries towards joint efforts in the field, linguistically as well as politically. The most important linguistic manifestation of such co-operation so far is probably the large-scale project *Modern Loanwords in the Nordic Countries*, presented in Anne-Line Graedler's contribution to the journal. The aims of the project are not only to produce a detailed comparative survey of the treatment of modern loanwords in the languages in the Nordic countries but also to study 'the linguistic climate', i.e. attitudes, and to provide a background for discussion and decision-making on the part of language councils. The useful list of references concluding the presentation clearly reflects the weight and wealth of empirical research carried out during the last decade. In Norway, the most substantial contribution no doubt derives from the work done and inspired by the writers of the volume under review.

As seen from its title, Johansson & Graedler's monumental monograph is written in Norwegian, which is understandable, although its contents should be of interest to anyone concerned with the globalisation of English. Its target readership is not explicitly specified, but seems to be a fairly general Norwegian audience. The presentation is admirably straightforward and free of linguistic jargon. In part, it is definitely of a didactic character and the book will indeed make an excellent textbook. Each chapter is concluded by a list of suggestions for further reading and the book is accompanied by a website providing tasks relating to topics discussed.

The bulk of the book's ten chapters and 318 pages deals with lexical borrowings: their history, users, domains, integration, etc. In view of this, the book's all-embracing subtitle would appear to be somewhat misleading; yet the first two chapters and the concluding one address other levels of language as well. Clearly, it could be argued and is also well documented that the impact of a donor language tends to be strongest and most easily perceived with regard to the lexicon.

The introductory chapter, *Engelsk - bro eller barriere?* ('English - bridge or barrier?') immediately whets the reader's appetite by quoting a prediction voiced in 1960 by a Norwegian publisher to the effect that English would be the dominant language in Norway before the new millennium. As we all know, this has not happened, in spite of an ever-increasing 'pressure' from English, the character and extent of which the

authors illustrate by some striking examples found in newspapers appearing on a randomly selected day in the year 2000. Still, the authors' general impression after this search was that - with the exception of advertisements - there were relatively few English words and expressions in most of the articles, which corresponds with the overall results of Chrystal's large-scale 1988 study of Swedish newspapers.

A particularly interesting section in the chapter discusses its main theme, as suggested in the title. Although the mastery of English is obviously a 'bridge' in that it enriches our existence by the possibility to communicate with people and to gain access to cultures all over the world, its global spread and especially its impact on the mother tongue can also have an excluding effect. The youngest and oldest age groups in a population, for example, often have no knowledge of English, and a sizeable number of school learners never acquire the skills required to benefit from or even understand all the information supplied in English only. By means of illuminating examples, taken from various genres, the authors demonstrate the problems of this information gap, which has largely been neglected but is clearly of vital importance and should be subjected to sociolinguistic research. In Norway as well as the other Nordic countries there is, unfortunately and mistakenly, something of a myth claiming that we are all virtually bilingual.

This rich and stimulating chapter, which encapsulates a great deal of the authors' message, continues by clarifying that *anglonorsk*, i.e. 'English as used in Norwegian' does not necessarily bear complete resemblance to the language as used in an English-speaking country. For one thing, words may be inflected according to the grammar of the receiving language, but they may also have acquired a new meaning. The three words that make up the main title of the book are used to illustrate this phenomenon, but - curiously - their exact significance and use is not described. The social aspect of the use of English is further highlighted by a plea for language awareness and consideration of audience in writing and speaking. It is argued that many English borrowings could easily be replaced by Norwegian words. This, again, is an interesting topic, highlighted by the language councils in the Nordic countries, among which the Norwegian council no doubt is the most militant (cf. www.sprakrad.no). In the opinion of the present reviewer, the advice given tends to be too categorical, since the borrowings often stand for a special aspect or may express a particular involvement. Replacement can

also be problematic for formal reasons: *e-post* instead of *e-mail* as exemplified by the authors is not equivalent/synonymous in that it cannot be used as a countable.

The chapter further contains a brief section exemplifying English-based changes in Norwegian sentence structure. These often subtle, unobtrusive changes are plentiful in the Scandinavian languages but are still waiting to be researched at length. As recently shown by Ljung (2004), the existence of large text corpora makes syntactic studies in this field feasible and worthwhile. Finally, the crucial problem of domain loss is briefly touched upon and an account is given of the aims and data collection of the project on which the present volume is based.

Chapter 2 provides a succinct, but in part unnecessarily detailed, overview of the history of the English language, including its global spread. Whereas it is not quite clear why descriptions of varieties such as pidgins and creoles should be included in this work unless it is shown that a learner language may display certain pidgin-like features, other topics are well placed, e.g. Kachru's model of World Englishes. Admittedly, in part the presentation does link up well with certain recommendations for the teaching of English in Norwegian schools given in Chapter 10.

Beginning with the next chapter, the focus is on borrowings, or rather 'loanwords', which is the term used by the authors throughout the presentation. This chapter, again, is largely a lesson in the history of the English language, describing the complicated shaping of its vocabulary through language contact. Although the presentation is very readable as such, it could be questioned whether it really deserves its place in this volume. The chapter also includes a historical account of loanwords in Norwegian, which is definitely more justified and includes important information on early borrowing from English. It also reviews some early studies on English loanwords in Norway, notably Stene 1945, who found that the number of English loanwords in data from the 1930s hardly exceeded loanwords from some other languages. The detailed account of Haugen's work on the Norwegian language in America deserves its place here, since interesting similarities as well as differences are to be found in the character and use of the English borrowings as compared to the situation in Norway today. A comparison of these two rather different scenarios would constitute a worthwhile project in its own right.

The following chapter, *Hvem bruker lånord og hvorfor?* ('Who uses loanwords and why?'), can be characterised as highly informative as well

as innovative. In some 50 pages the authors succeed in producing subtle descriptions of the particular settings and attitudes determining the scope and character of the borrowings as well as detailed data-based examples and figures. The chapter opens with an interesting discussion of problems in determining what to include in the category 'loanword'; hence it is difficult to establish just how many loanwords there are at a given time. Should, for example, a word that has been totally integrated, such as *jobbe* ('work'), be included? Incidentally, an informant study as to what is considered a loanword or not, should be interesting. In a course on language change at Stockholm University a 20-year-old student recently gave the word *container* as an example of a completely integrated loanword, claiming that 'it had been around for so long'. As for myself, about 50 years her senior, I view the same word as a very recent addition to the Swedish language and clearly marked as a borrowing.

The chapter abounds with interesting ideas and discussions. Among other things, the authors ask themselves why there seems to be a general impression that English loanwords are extremely frequent in running texts, such as newspaper articles, when this is not really the case. In the interesting section called *Synlighet* ('Visibility') it is put forward that not only do the English words mostly represent 'content-bearing' nouns, but they are also highlighted through deviant spelling conventions and - if spoken - pronunciations. In addition, they often occur in prominent positions, such as headlines, and are often new and topical (reality TV, web design), sometimes even 'loaded'. As is well known, the frequency of English loanwords is very dependent on text type, subculture and domain. The following settings are presented: popular music (where Norwegian is seriously endangered), fashion, sport (concluded by an interesting account of a number of sports-related borrowings which have acquired more generalised meanings), film and TV (including an interesting study of the increasing use of all-English titles, some of which have even been changed in Norway, e.g. *Miss Congeniality*, called *Miss Undercover* in Norway; in Sweden, by contrast, its title is *Miss Secret Agent!*), advertising (where a great deal of punning presupposing a knowledge of Norwegian is found), economics, names of various kinds (cf. Pahta & Taavitsainen 2004 studying Finnish telephone directories), the computer world, and spoken language (still very much under-researched). An informant study as to the acceptability of English loanwords in Norway showed clear differences with regard to region

(lower acceptability in the North), occupation (low acceptability on the part of teacher trainees as compared to a group doing their military service) and gender (somewhat lower acceptability among women). The chapter is concluded by speculations on some underlying reasons for preferring English words, such as expressing modernity, seeking attention, punning, expressing emotion, involvement and identity.

Chapters 5 to 8 carefully account for the treatment of the loanwords: their integration viewed from different perspectives (formal, social, psychological and lexical), their varying pronunciation and spelling, including the role of the Norwegian language council in this respect), their morphological integration (including an interesting study of grammatical gender assignment to English loanwords), semantic change, and the category labelled 'indirect' loans, especially 'substitution' loans, whereby a word already existing in the receiving language extends its meaning due to influence from the donor language. The last-mentioned topic is richly illustrated by results from a pioneering study.

Chapter 9, which is devoted to code-switching, is more general and impressionistic. The authors deplore the fact that very little work has been done on spoken language; in fact, Sharp 2001 seems to be the only large-scale study in the Nordic countries so far.

The title of the final chapter is *Engelsk eller ikke engelsk* - is that the question? ('English or no English - ...'). This wording, which does not lend itself to a completely adequate translation into English, is meant as a response to a Danish publication with a similar-sounding title but ending in a statement, viz. that is the question. Graedler & Johansson wish to emphasise that both languages are needed; the question is rather when to use one and when the other. In considering what might constitute the greatest threat to the Norwegian language the authors briefly advocate some restriction in the use of English loanwords, e.g. in talking or writing to/for an audience to whom language might be a barrier. Quite rightly, however, the bulk of the discussion of endangerment has to do with domain loss. This is, incidentally, also the main concern of the language council in Sweden, which is referred to in the chapter (cf. www.spraknamnden.se/SSN/handl.htm). Furthermore, the authors recommend changes in the teaching of the mother tongue as well as English with a view to raising language awareness, e.g. by considering varieties of English other than standard varieties found in Britain or the

U.S. The interesting and important topic 'English as a lingua franca' is briefly discussed towards the end of the chapter.

In all, this is a solid as well as stimulating book to simply enjoy reading and to keep for continuous reference. I cannot claim to have done justice to its richness but I hope at least to have demonstrated one of its many merits, viz. the wealth of information and ideas that suggest and inspire further research. This, if anything, is the hallmark of good educational and scholarly writing.

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